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A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE AND SUFFERINGS

OF

MRS. JANE JOHNS,

WHO WAS BARBAROUSLY WOUNDED AND SCALPED BY SEMINOLE INDIANS, IN EAST FLORIDA.

"Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God, which he hath given thee."—*Deut.* 16, xvii.

PUBLISHED EXCLUSIVELY FOR HER BENEFIT.

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TO THE REV. DAVID BROWN,

RECTOR OF TRINITY CHURCH,

St. Augustine, East Florida.

Sir,

Your benevolent and charitable exertions to relieve the sufferings of the unhappy young widow, Mrs. Johns, by your timely and eloquent appeal to the sympathies of your congregation, have called forth her warmest gratitude, and the general praise of your christian brethren.

Permit me, sir, in testimony of your worth, and in thankfulness for the valuable addition you have been pleased to make to this humble design, to dedicate to you these few pages.

That you may long live in the enjoyment of your health, and that peace of mind which ever attends upon the truly pious, is the sincere wish of

Your devoted servant,

THE WRITER.

East Florida, February 4, 1837.

PREFACE.

The writer, in publishing this Narrative, is guided in his undertaking solely by a desire to benefit the unfortunate object herein referred to. Circumstances incidental to the early life of Mrs. Johns, were received from her aunt, Mrs. Carter, (a lady much respected in Florida) who constituted one of the suffering refugees from Trout Creek to Pearson's Island. Those facts which relate to Mrs. J's being shot and scalped, have already been before the public through the newspapers, and are so well authenticated, as to preclude a doubt of their correctness.—Vide Appendix B.

The address to Dr. Welch would not have been annexed, but that it brings with it corroborative evidence of the respectable character which Mrs. Johns hitherto sustained in Florida. It is not probable that such distinguished gentlemen as Col. Mills, Col. Dell, his honor Judge Doggett, and in fact any of the subscribers to the handsome letter to Dr. Welch, would have lent their names upon such an occasion, were they not convinced that Mrs. Johns merited the sympathy of the public.—Vide Appendix C.

Any further appeal than the plain statement of the sufferings of Mrs. Johns, would not only be useless, but an absolute innovation upon the better judgment of public feeling. It is sufficient that the community be in possession of this simple narrative, and the writer feels well assured it cannot be perused without commiserating the deep afflictions of the destitute young person for whose benefit it is designed.

NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER I.

In the records of Indian warfare, a more interesting case of extreme suffering, singular adventure, and wonderful escape from the hands of savages, has probably never occurred, than in that of the unfortunate subject of the following narrative. Many have been the victims who have fallen beneath the tomahawk, or before the Indian arrow or rifle; of these some have been scalped after, and some undoubtedly before, life became extinct; but few have survived the combined effects of the rifle, the scalping knife and fire, as occurred in the case of the young lady, whose sufferings we are now about to detail.

The parents of Mrs. Johns occupied a respectable station in East Florida, and had, previous to incursions of the Indians, accumulated a sufficiency of worldly goods to render them comfortably independent. It appears they were pious and contented christians, floating easily down the tranquil stream of life, to the year 1813, when they were first aroused from their sweet repose of peace and quiet, by the fierce yell of the savage sons of the forest. Here commenced the first act of Indian tragedy, in which this worthy family bore a conspicuous part, and in which (although then in *embryo*) Jane was an unconscious participator.

At this period, Mr. and Mrs. Hall, the father and mother of the present Mrs. Johns, dwelt upon the borders of Trout Creek, which empties itself into the superb river St. John, when the whole of this district became devastated by Seminole Indians, who appeared in a considerable body in the immediate neighborhood of their residence. Mr. and Mrs. H. fled at night, but only in time to hear the wailings and lamentations of their friends and neighbors, many of whom were sacrificed; among them, were James Hollingsworth and Daniel Pritchard, whose scalps were subsequently presented to the Spanish commandant in St. Augustine, who paid a premium to the Indians for such horrid and disgusting trophies.

From the vicinity of this dreadful massacre, the parents of Mrs. Johns escaped in a boat, and fled to Pearson's Island, on the sea coast, a distance of about fifty miles.

The sufferings of Mrs. Hall at this time must have been very great, exposed as she was, in an open boat, to the alternate effects of heavy rains and a scorching sun, for many hours, in a very enfeebled state of health—and scarcely had these unfortunate people landed upon this hitherto uninhabited and desolate island, than Mrs. Hall was warned by nature that an addition would be made to its population. A bench was hastily formed of such boards as could be procured from the boat which had conveyed them hither, raised sufficiently high to keep Mrs. H. from the wet earth; and upon this rude construction, with no other canopy than that of heaven, was the unfortunate subject of this narrative ushered into a world of trial and trouble, August 23d, 1813.

As speedily as possible after this sudden event, a tenement was formed of the bark of pine trees and palmetto leaves, in which the family resided from August to the succeeding January.

CHAPTER II.

Confidence being again restored, Mr. and Mrs. Hall returned to within a few miles of where they formerly dwelt, and settled upon a wild romantic spot called "Sweet Water Branch." Here they remained until April 16, 1821, when this persecuted family were again startled from their tranquility by the appalling war-whoop, to them doubly terrific from the painful associations of past events. A second time did they escape, hurrying with them little Jane, now in her eighth year. In this attack, her brother fell by the hands of the merciless savage, and her uncle received three desperate wounds from their unerring rifles—one ball fractured his arm, a second passed through his leg, and a third through the hip-bone. Again were the ears of these persecuted people assailed by the dying shrieks of their expiring neighbors, for they distinctly heard the vain screams and cries for help of two young ladies, and their mother (Mrs. Lane) who were then being butchered by Indians.

Screened from the keen eyes of their barbarous enemies by the mantle of darkness, saying in the language of Scripture, "Come let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up"—They now sought refuge on the eastern side of the river St. John, where sickness succeeded their recent afflictions, and the family consequently removed to the vicinity of St. Mary's river, and there remained until peace was once more arranged between the red and white man. Mr. Hall and his family then retired into the interior, and established a farm at Alachua, upon the banks of New River—here Miss Jane Hall remained until her marriage, which took place in January, 1836. She now became the wife of Mr. Clement Johns, a young man of excellent character and of industrious habits. The first essay in life of this young couple, was to rent a farm, and were in the way of obtaining a comfortable maintenance, when they were suddenly and unexpectedly surrounded by Indians.

As corroborating testimony of the courage, suffering, and almost unprecedented preservation of Mrs. Johns from death, and escape from the hands of a merciless Indian foe, we will take a statement of the circumstances relative to this horrible epoch in the life of Mrs. Johns, as related in the Journal of Dr. Andrew Welsh, Post Surgeon to the Military Station at the city of Jacksonville, East Florida.

CHAPTER III.

Extract from the Journal of Dr. Welch.

"On Saturday, September 17th, 1836, I was requested by a committee formed of the most respectable inhabitants of this city, (Jacksonville), to visit Mrs. Johns, who, it was reported on good authority, had recently been dangerously wounded and scalped by Indians. I immediately complied.

"Although at the convocation of this meeting volunteers were numerous to form an escort, their number gradually subsided to five, viz. Captain John L. Thigpen, and privates Granville and George Priest, brothers, (the younger about 16 years of age,) John Faulk and Frederick Miller. Under this guard, accompanied by a carriage and driver belonging to Col. James Dell, supplied with that promptitude and humane feeling for which he is so justly celebrated, I proceeded for the purpose of rendering Mrs. Johns such aid as my humble skill could afford, and, if possible, to bring back in the carriage to Jacksonville, the wretched sufferer, where she would be in less danger than in the vicinity of her late home.

"The day was far advanced before our departure—nor had we progressed beyond three miles, when Miller commenced a frivolous excuse and finally deserted, leaving only four and myself to fulfil our melancholy and certainly hazardous duty.

"We halted for the night at Mr. Eubank's plantation, from whence the enemy had taken some horses a few nights previous.

"*Sept.* 18. Early this morning we proceeded by an unfrequented trail through the dreary and monotonous pine forest, until we arrived at the still burning embers of the fire which had consumed the greater portion of the body of poor Mr. Johns.

"The house in which he and his affectionate young wife had so lately dwelt in all the bliss of early wedded love, was now nought but a few smouldering ruins, in the centre of which a few bricks pointed out the spot where lied buried, a portion only, of the remains of one who but a few days since, lived in health and high hope of reaping the fruits of his honest labor—the surrounding cultivation shewed evidence of his industry and enterprise.

"Never did I behold a more melancholy or wilder scene than that on which I now gazed in sadness—in one spot I saw some calcined human bones left unsepulchered, being too fragile to remove—they

pulverised at the touch. In another place, I noticed fragments of glasses, plates, and other articles of domestic use, from which but a few hours previous, this fond young couple had received in thankfulness their daily sustenance—upon the stump of a pine tree I found some remains of hair—here the murderous villains had severed from the scalp of the yet living young widow, her long, and lately so much admired tresses.

"Some fifteen or twenty minutes were spent in sorrowful contemplation, reviewing this sylvan scene of death and desolation, when I was startled from deep reverie by the brief command—mount—which burst from the lips of our Captain, seemingly by an effort to give vent to a heart crowded by feelings of grief and indignation. In melancholy mood we now quitted this, never to be forgotten, wilderness.

"Our route now passed through some dangerous situations for ambuscade, and I could but admire the caution and discretion on the part of Capt. Thigpen on these occasions, in warning his men of the necessity of strict silence and vigilance—at the same time impressing upon them the importance of our undertaking. Although Major Hart had passed but a few days previous with a large company of men, our small band was at great risk of falling in with straggling Indians, who (as has been since proved) were still lurking in this vicinity.

"About twelve miles from the late scene of human butchery brought us to the residence of Mr. Sparkman, under whose hospitable roof Mrs. Johns had been conveyed. Merciful God! and to his mercy alone can be attributed the strength which enabled this child of sorrow to travel this distance under such a complication of wounds and afflictions.

"Here I beheld a sight, at the bare recollection of which my very heart sickens. I until then thought I had viewed, in the course of my professional career, wounds of the most revolting character. I have witnessed many horrors in the practice of surgery, I might almost venture to acknowledge without wincing—but when I looked upon this young widow, prostrate, in calm resignation, with one arm deeply lacerated, so much so that the muscles absolutely gaped open nearly to the bones. The same rifle ball which had effected this wound passed through the neck; these, in themselves, were painful to behold in one so peculiarly wretched, but who can depict in colors sufficiently powerful to convey to the imagination the appalling spectacle of her head, divested of the scalp to the bare bone, in two places, of which it was not only denuded and scraped, but portions absolutely cut out by the knife of the demon who had inflicted such unheard of torture!!! I measured the extent of skull divested of its natural integuments, which was from the upper part of the forehead (leaving at its commencement only a few hairs) to the occiput, nine inches and a half—from above one ear to the opposite, nine inches—on the right side of the head it appeared to me that the knife had slipped, a cut had been made obliquely, otherwise the circumcision of the scalp was tolerably regular. Her

legs were considerably burned, but not to the extent I apprehended, from the appearance of her dress when shewn to me.

"Mrs. Johns was at this time thoroughly sensible of her situation, with a perfect recollection of all the circumstances connected with this piteous tragedy.

"The following morning I submitted to her choice whether to proceed with me to Jacksonville, where, if she should arrive, every necessary for her could be readily procured, and where she would be in comparative safety—or remain in her present situation, where a probability existed of her dying for want of surgical assistance. My professional duties in Jacksonville precluded the possibility of my being detained any length of time. Observing in her a character for resolution and determination, I unhesitatingly pointed out all the difficulties by which we were surrounded. I went so far as to express an apprehension that we might be attacked on our road to Jacksonville, or that she might perish on the way by fatigue and exposure. On the other hand, should the Indians be informed that she was still in existence, the house in which she then was, would in all likelihood be assailed. She deliberated a few minutes and then firmly decided to proceed with me. I felt much relieved by her determination."

CHAPTER IV.

Continuation of Dr. Welch's Narrative.

"Taking a different route from that by which we came, for some miles we progressed slowly, the carriage at times passing over logs and through swamps and ravines—she must have suffered dreadfully but did not complain.

"Captain Thigpen now pointed out certain signs which he assured me were those left by Indians, and he presently became confirmed in his belief, by discovering at a distance a fire—in so unfrequented a spot, (in time of war,) and in a section of country known to be infested by savages, he said he felt assured that the enemy was at hand. Capt. T—, George Priest, and myself reconnoitred as far as was consistent with safety or without discovering ourselves, and thereby exposing the life of our interesting charge to great hazard. We returned to the carriage in some anxiety—Mrs. Johns was aware of the danger by which we were threatened, but appeared resigned and passive. I do firmly believe that every man of our little escort would sooner have perished than abandon our patient protegée—happily we passed on unmolested, and after a tedious journey of eleven hours, arrived at Jacksonville.

"My patient was much exhausted, but taking into consideration her enfeebled state of body from loss of blood, consequent upon the dreadful cruelties inflicted upon her—her extreme mental suffering, and her being at the same time near the period of parturition—it

becomes a matter of wonder how she was supported in such an undertaking."

Mrs. Johns continued in a feeble state until Oct. 6th, when, in addition to all her former sufferings, her last and fondest hope was blighted. By the kindest care and attention, the mother was saved from death, but nature could not sustain such an accumulation of trials,—her infant had perished some days previous to her confinement.

The following notice in the Jacksonville Courier was taken of this event:

"Mrs. Jane Johns, who was so barbarously scalped a short time since in this vicinity, is convalescing rapidly—her sufferings have been extreme, though much relieved by the praiseworthy attention and skill of Dr. Andrew Welch.

"The 6th ult., Mrs. Johns gave birth to a still born child."

CHAPTER V.

We think it necessary to pursue the statement of circumstances attendant upon the murder of Mr. Johns, and the wounding and scalping of Mrs. J., as received from her, subsequent to her arrival in Jacksonville—viz:

"On Thursday morning, about 10 o'clock, Mr. and Mrs. Johns discovered Indians at the corner of a fence, within a few yards of where they then stood. No sooner had they clearly discovered their war-painted enemies, than three rifles were discharged; the last took effect in the breast of the early doomed husband—both fled to the house as fast as the tottering limbs of poor wounded Johns would permit, who was bleeding profusely. On gaining the house, Mrs. J. closed the door. Here was exhibited the first act of courage and devotion by this fond young wife—unheeding her own danger, or thinking of self-preservation, she carefully tied a handkerchief round the body of her husband, hoping to stay the rapid effusion of blood! What must have been the state of her feelings at this critical moment? her husband evidently mortally wounded—no friend to counsel or cheer her—and nine blood thirsty savages approaching her insecure retreat.

"The Indians cautiously advanced near and nearer still, until Mrs. Johns saw them peering through the cracks of their log-built cottage, which being newly erected, were sufficiently wide for her to distinguish clearly a considerable portion of the faces of these terrific hyenas. She counted nine: among them was a negro, who joined the Indians in urging Mr. and Mrs. Johns to leave the house, threatening, if they did not, it should be immediately set fire to.

"Mr. Johns, during this time, was seated on one end of a table—he took his rifle, threw away the former priming, intending to renew it with fresh powder, but became, as Mrs. Johns supposes, too weak to complete his design. Both now piteously entreated the hell-

hounds would spare their lives. This appeal only served to convince the Indians of their own safety in the entire helplessness of their victims. An order was now issued to *charge the house*, which mandate was delivered in good English, and immediately complied with. The door was burst open, and Mr. Johns, in an instant shot through the brain.

"The frantic young wife, in an agony of grief, desirous to receive a death-blow that should consign them both to one early grave, threw herself upon the bleeding corpse of her husband. An Indian now seized her by the hand, and dragged her with violence to the door, saying, in his own language, *hie pelon eschay*—go. She demanded to where? And he pointed in a westerly direction. Before she could even cast "one longing, lingering look behind," another Indian presented his rifle at her head; she intuitively held up her arm, through which a ball instantly passed; then through the neck. Mrs. J. observes, she noticed a grin of delight upon the countenance of the Indian who shot her. In relating this horrible adventure she says, she kid not feel hurt, but fell. Clinging to a forlorn hope, she feigned death; laying with her face upon her hands, she beheld distinctly the monster in his infernal preparation for scalping her. He first took from her head, her comb, and loosed her flowing hair. He then stepped back a few feet, and drew from his side a common wooden handle butcher's knife, which to her mind, she remarks, rendered it doubtful whether designed for her throat, or for their customary, and last operation after death—*scalping*.

She remained, as if already dead, until he left her, with his disgusting trophy.

> "He had strip'd the flesh,
> As ye peal the fig when the fruit is fresh."

CHAPTER VI.

It seems the next object of the savages was to set fire to the house, and although there was a tolerable fire at the moment in the room, Mrs. Johns heard one Indian desire another to strike a light,* which being done, a blaze was produced, and some dried fodder in a loft above the room ignited. A torch was next applied to her dress, at the feet; she had sufficient presence of mind and fortitude even to allow the flesh of her lower extremities to burn, until the Indians left the premises, which they now did in much haste, making the welkin ring with their war-whoop.

From the moment of Mrs. Johns being scalped, the Indians were necessitated to pass by her body repeatedly, and as she lay partly

* From some superstitious belief, Indians do not use the fire which has been kindled by white men, for the destruction of their property, but always have recourse to that procured by themselves.—*Related by Mrs. Carter, aunt to Mrs Johns, who lived many years in close vicinity to the Indians in Florida.*

in one room, and partly in the passage which passed through the centre of the building, they had some difficulty in their ingress and egress, without coming in actual contact with her person, which they now seemed to shun with horror and disgust. *

Finding all quiet, her first thought was to extinguish the fire of her clothes, to accomplish which, she scraped the blood from her denuded head in her hands, and cautiously (for she still feared some Indians were near,) applied it to the fire, which was actually consuming her.

After having extinguished the fire of her dress, she raised herself up, but immediately fainted. On recovering, her first object was to remove the body of her husband, to prevent its being consumed by the devouring element, which was making rapid progress through the roof. In this humane and affectionate design, she was defeated by want of physical strength. Being convinced of her incapacity to remove the corpse, she attempted her own escape, and no sooner had she reached the outside of the house, than she again became senseless. Once more restored to reason, she noticed a bag, in which coffee had been kept; this she applied to her bare skull, to defend it from the piercing rays of the sun, which at this time poured down its effulgent beams with cruel effect.

In this deplorable condition she crawled (after repeatedly fainting,) a distance of about 200 yards, to a shallow pond of water, and after slaking her thirst, from her hands, deeply imbrued in her own gore, she laid herself down, as she supposed, to die.

Her chief object in going so far, she observes, was with a view of preventing the Indians discovering her retreat, apprehending she might be immolated upon the burning pile consuming her doubly murdered husband. At the same time, she was impressed with an idea, that should she die in her present situation, her body might be discovered by some friend, whose attention would be roused by the buzzards, which would soon be hovering around her.

Four or five hours must have passed away in a state of partial unconsciousness, before Mrs. Johns was discovered. She lifted up her voice in prayer, and the Father of mercies heard her supplications. She cried unto the Lord,

"The enemy hath persecuted my soul, he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead."

"Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolation."

*Indians, after touching the corpse of a pregnant woman, consider themselves unclean until they have performed ablutions, and purified themselves with physic and sweating. The latter is performed by digging holes in the earth, into which they bury themselves to the chin.—*Ibid.*

CHAPTER VII.

This desolate young woman had now drained the cup of misery to its last and bitterest dregs—the lamp of life was fast flickering—she says that all appeared black before her—true indeed, "*she dwelt in darkness.*"

In this "extremity of earthly woe" was she discovered by ——, her lost husband's father! who was returning from Black Creek, accompanied by his friend and neighbor, Mr. Lowther. Well might they have exclaimed with Shakspeare,

> "Art thou any thing?
> Art thou some God, some Angel, or some Devil,
> That makest my blood cold and my hair to stand?
> Speak to me, what art thou?"

We leave the reader to figure to himself the agonizing position of these two gentlemen when they first caught sight of the still blazing habitation, from whence Mr. Johns had three days previous parted from his son and daughter-in-law, (to whom he was equally attached,) and Mr. Lowther having left a family within seven miles (the nearest residence) of this scene of annihilation.

Both immediately knew, by evidence of tracks and other signs, (readily distinguished by inland settlers,) that Indians had here exercised their revengeful ravages. Their first impression was, that the young pair had shared an equal fate in the conflagration; something was now observed moving in the water at some paces distant; each carefully approached, until Mr. Johns declared it at first to be an Indian, and then an Indian squaw with a red handkerchief upon ker head. Under this impression, yielding to the phrenzied feeling of a bereaved parent, he raised his rifle to his shoulder, determined upon some satisfaction from (as he supposed,) one of his enemies, when Mr. Lowther, with that humanity which does honor to his nature, entreated him to forbear, and not to take away the life of a defenceless woman. He remembered that "*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*"

This natural ebullition of spirit in Mr. Johns became allayed, and in some measure pacified—both advanced to within a few feet of the object before them, when, how much greater must have been their horror and amazement, to discover that the helpless creature was not an enemy, but the scarcely living daughter-in-law of him who had been on the verge of extinguishing her remaining feeble spark of life.

In addition to her misfortunes already enumerated, Mrs. Johns, on January 17th, 1837, lost her father, who died at Black Creek, after having experienced the entire loss of his property by Indians,

which, with the sufferings of his child, it is presumed, hastened him to his eternal place of rest. Thus is this young widow, (trained to every expectation of ease and comfort,) at the early age of twenty-three years, deprived of her last and only stay for support—consequently, at the earnest persuasion of her friends, calls upon a generous public for sympathy and succor—both in behalf of herself and an aged mother.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

Annexed are some passages of a sermon preached by the Rev. David Brown in St. Augustine, November, 1836—on the occasion of a collection for the most unfortunate Mrs. Johns.

"My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.—Matt. ix, 18.

The text, as falling in our way in to-day's service,* is adapted, rather as an appropriate *motto*, than as a foundation of discourse. * * * And Jesus arose and followed the afflicted suppliant, and so did his disciples. And when he came into the ruler's house, amid the jeers and scoffs of the unfeeling bystanders—mourners by trade—who laughed him to scorn, he approached to lay the hand of his healing power upon her. The sufferers were put forth, and he took her by the hand and she arose. And the father's heart, stricken, and torn, and crushed, as it had been, was gladdened with joy, that his darling was restored. * * * *

I am to speak of those who have known all the mystery of death, but who can speak of that sublime subject only from the grave! *Of one*, and for one, I am to speak, from whose bloody couch of pain and mutilation, much we might learn of death's mysterious character and doings! She was snatched from his last grasp by her protecting angel, that she might give lessons of thought to the unthinking, and teach, if any thing can, the unfeeling heart of apathy, that "feels no sorrows but its own," to throb with sympathy for other's woes.

And *to* those I am to speak who are *bound*, in all reason bound, to think deeply and soberly on the condition and on the signs of the times; and who strongly should *feel* that sober thought and active virtue become their condition and prospects, as citizens of a suffering—perhaps a doomed country;—as candidates for another state of being, where ere long all the mysteries of death will be also known.

It is not my intention, nor has it ever been, to *amuse*, but to *benefit* my hearers. It has never been mine to seek the poor meed of popular applause, generally despicable in itself, and most often awarded to despicable displays of common place declamation, equally foreign from correct taste and from divine truth; of influence alone, with such as could be influenced by nothing better—stony hearts and vacant heads. To hearts which can *feel*, and to heads that can *think*, I would now address myself. Such I shall not fail to interest; for they will go with me where there is every thing to move the

* Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

feeling heart, and to engage the deep thoughts of every sober mind. And surely, this bleeding country's hearts, and minds, should feel, and think, intensely and deeply. It is meet, and right, and their bounden duty. The means too, as well as the cause, are at hand, in the desolations and diseases, and in blood; and in bereavements of every character, every where presented to our view. In our streets, the maimed and the war stricken; in our hospitals and homes, the disabled and dying are found in numbers, calling on us for sympathy and for succor.

Ask some maimed one, yet spared the blessed privilege to move, to accompany you to where, in your own city, rest in the silent grave, the brave—unfortunate youths, whose young blood has moistened the soil of our country!

When he has told you how boldly and how bitterly they fought, and fell, and suffered—lingering out many days and nights in anguish—hear then the especially sad tale of one, in beauteous early manhood, whom twice spared, as by a miracle, from a watery grave, was brought down by a savage rifle, to suffer a long agony of pain, ere he fell into an untimely grave, soon to be followed by a broken hearted mother.*

My friends, do you know any thing of the meaning of a broken heart?

She felt, in the loss of her darling son, by a death so shocking, that the hand of the "great and the dreadful God" was upon her, and with her heart crushed under it, she shrieked, and shrank into the grave.

Was she *alone* in this extremity of suffering? No brethren! she was but an example before your eyes, of a large class of extreme sufferers, in our suffering land by this savage war.

In her case, the silver cord of life was broken too,—in mercy broken—and death came to her sad relief! And many more are still *living* examples of broken heartedness. Well may the tear fall on the graves of the youthful warriors, who fell in mortal conflict, but lingered in life to be buried among their friends, and on the graves too, of those unhappy ones from far—denied the blessed privilege to die among their friends—who sleep with strangers. They are tears that warm the heart. But what is there to warm, or to soothe in the recollection of his severer fate, who was left in full health to perish—none can tell the manner. The shocked soul recoils from the contemplation.† And rich is the grace, and powerful as rich, which has sustained the mother, so stricken and bereaved, by that dire and mysterious calamity.

But in the thoughts of *His* chastisements, who never willingly afflicts, shall we forget his remembered mercies? No! Let the shocked soul still expand in grateful acknowledgment, that the brave survivors of the youthful victims alluded to were saved from the

* Domingo Martinelly, died of his wounds received at Dunlawton; and his mother died as stated above.

† Information has since been received, that the lamented young man, Gould, was taken after the battle of Dunlawton, and shot by the Indians.

dreadful fate of a far stronger body of brave men. That Putnam is not another Dade, and Dunlawton another field of savage massacre, not one escaping to tell the tale of woe. God be praised for all his mercies! * * * * * * * * *

It is a declaration of wisdom, that it is better for the heart to go to a house of mourning, than to a house of mirth. It must then be profitable for us to soften our hearts by a recollection of some of the sad events, which have brought distress and mourning upon our land.

Little it is at most, that we can know—a small portion, perhaps, that we can imagine, of the amount of wretchedness, and grief and broken heartedness, which has already accumulated, and is still accumulating upon us, and diffusing its bitterness through the homes and hearts of our nation, to its utmost bounds.

Our imagination may very truly and vividly bring before our view the deserted and bloody battle ground, where more than one hundred brave men, coming to our defence, were slain by the unsparing foe! Send forth your mind's eye, and behold the dreadful panorama of Death! See the advance guard, and the gallant chief, cut down by the first fire of the enemy! Look on the ensuing, protracted, murderous conflict! Hear the savage yells, the crack, the crash, the volley, the roar, the groans and shrieks of the wounded and the dying! Orders, and spirit stirring words of courage, issuing from bleeding lips of maimed and mangled officers, to men not less maimed and mangled—the still living fragment of a late hale and gallant band!! Confusion reigns, and its kindly, though dreadful influence, gives relief to our lacerated hearts! We would revive their wholesome sympathies.

Select then a single object of contemplation. Let it be the young officer whose left arm is broken in the very beginning of the fight. For hours behold him, while still cheering the men, using the lacerated stump as a rest for his ever active musket, until he is finally overcome and slain! Or, to some hearts, a more affecting sight may be that of another, not less brave and devoted, *both* arms disabled, sitting on the ground, and, in mute and broken spirited amazement, gazing vacantly on the scene of horror and suffering that surrounds him. Oh! of all ruins, how most melancholy is that of the warm heart and the radiant brain! and especially by means so horrible.

Or, again, the work of death seems finished! All, save ever and anon, a dying shriek. All is silent! The savage foe has retired! Satisfied with what he has done, he seems to respect the repose of the dying and the dead; when lo, the approach of a troop of deeply darker fiends to triumph over a fallen foe, which living they had not dared to face!

While they are employed in the coward work of butchering alike the dying and the dead, there comes forth bleeding and mangled from among the heaps of bloody corpses, the last surviving officer—the gallant Bassinger. This soul of chivalry had never dreamed of beings in human form, who could resist the plea for l[illegible] at such a

time, and under circumstances so deeply moving. Alas! his imploring wounds and supplicating lips avail not!

With fiend-like laughter, they reply to his prayer for life, and with the crimsoned axe the murderous scene is closed!

Ah! would *God*, in this cruel instance had stood alone, a solitary witness, that

"The angel Pity, shuns the walks of war."

All these scenes of woe, with many more, scarcely less dreadful and appalling, that might be named, however, give but a partial view of the real amount of misery produced by this savage war.

Our strong emotions are excited by the carnage of the battle field, and by the fate of the unsuspecting victim fallen under the ambushed foe! A mother with her infant children are murdered by a band of cruel ingrates. A husband and father is taken, and leaves a weeping widow and helpless orphans to the world's cold charity. Thousands are driven from their hard earned homes of comfort, all to suffer; and many to perish by famine and pestilence; and we forget the distant tears that flow, and the far away hearts that are crushed by the feeling, that it is the survivor's self who dies!

Much is the *blood*, but more are the tears of anguish, which cry from the ground against the authors of this war! "Father, forgive them!" and oh! let thy consoling grace and mercy be vouchsafed to the widows and the orphans it has made; and to the bereaved parents and other relatives and friends, whose hearts it has sunk in sorrow, and whose eyes it has dimmed with weeping; and hasten thou on, the blessed day, when wars shall cease, and thy reign be established forever. * * * * * * * *

But, brethren and friends, on this occasion we are particularly to present to your notice the claims on your sympathy and kindness, of the greatly unfortunate woman for whose benefit a collection has been invited.

The case of Mrs. Johns is one than which none can be named, or scarcely imagined, more powerfully adapted to warm the heart in sympathy, or in charity to open the liberal hand.

Her claims before us are made by a worthy and accredited representative of those who have suffered all that human nature can suffer and live. You are aware that she was despited of all but life; and even for that to the ruthless spoilers she is not indebted.

The crumbling bones, found by the pursuers of the foe, among the ashes of her demolished home, were the bones of her doubly murdered husband! The blood stains were of their mingled gore! The hair steeped in blood and covered with dust and ashes, near the mouldering pile of ruin was from her own mangled head!

You require not to be told, that a severe wound from an Indian rifle was the tender mercy she obtained by supplicating the cruel savage; nor that the barbarian scalping knife was not withheld!

Left for dead, by the miscreant butchers, the fire kindling upon her garments aroused her from a death-like swoon, and with the blood of her own wounds having extinguished her burning garments,

she attempted in vain to remove the remains of her murdered husband. Her almost exhausted strength but sufficed to carry her own bleeding and lacerated frame, from the consuming element.

Wretched, mutilated, and forlorn, she was found by the bereaved and sorrowing father of her dead partner, and removed to where she found shelter and kindness. From that shelter, and that kindness, her case required that she should be removed to where she would be within reach of medical aid; and even with the best helps which skill and kindness might afford, there remained but the slightest hope of her recovery.

But it has pleased God, in rich mysterious mercy, to preserve her through her perils, thus far; and it is believed she will recover, a living witness of the most ferocious barbarism.

God's healing hand has been laid upon her, and she lives! * * Almost as from the dead she has risen, and I trust that none will be asked to contribute to her sustenance and comfort, who shall not deem it a privilege to be allowed thus to become a co-worker with God, by whom she has been rescued from a complicated death.

As all readers of the scriptures are acquainted with the obligatory and the rewardable character of the virtue to which you are now called, I need not dwell on the high and holy, and humane motives of the practice of it. It is to an act of pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, that you are invited; for the object is indeed a widow in affliction, helpless and dependant, and to all who extend kindly the helping hand to her relief, I am authorized in saying, they "shall not lose their reward."

"Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house; then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health spring forth speedily." * * * * *

(B.)

Extract from the Jacksonville Courier.

INDIANS—BUTCHERY—PURSUIT—ESCAPE.

Our townsmen who went day before yesterday to the rescue of Mr. Higginbotham's family, as stated in our last, have just returned —themselves and horses jaded and looking as if they had had a hard pursuit. They are the best and bravest of our men, and went with the expectation and determination to pursue and overtake and destroy these daring Indians.

Major Hart, to whom we are indebted for the following particulars, reports, that on Thursday about 10 o'clock, they reached the house of Mr. Higginbotham, which was attacked. There they found the two men (one of whom was sick) and the two ladies on guard with guns in their hands. The Indians had not re-appeared after their being beaten off before Mr. Higginbotham left to report to us in town. On a slight examination, they saw a number of bullet marks in the house, made by the Indians' shots—and saw the

clothes of the younger lady, through which a rifle ball had passed. She had arisen early, and gone out towards a branch for water, when the attack was made upon the house, between which and herself were the Indians. The Indians fired at her, and one ball passed her side so close as to cut through *all* her clothes, but touched not her body. She ran to the branch, secreting herself therein, and subsequently made her way into the house, past the Indians in safety. After a little time, spent in search, the party under Maj. Hart found where the Indians encamped the night previous, not three-fourths of a mile from the house, and also the spot where the horses were tied while the attack was made on the house. From that spot our party took the Indians' trail. It struck the Tallahassee road, and these daring devils kept the road for near 10 miles, riding at full speed as their trail showed, till they came to Mr. M'Cormick's house, then occupied by Mr. Johns and wife, on the road 18 miles from Jacksonville. Our party in pursuit reached this house about 4 o'clock P. M. It was a mouldering pile of ruins. On examination, major Hart states, that they found the calcined bones of a human *being burned* in the house. A piece of the *back bone* was found with *some flesh upon it.* The skull was to be seen, but at the touch it fell in and crumbled to pieces. The bones were mostly reduced to ashes. Near the house was found a quantity of hair, to appearance that of a female. Thence the trail seemed to be still on the road, and our men pushed on with increased speed and anxiety, to overtake the murdering Indians. They expected to do so at the next house, (Mr. Lowder's) 7 miles ahead. On arriving there they found the house abandoned by the two females and their children who lived there, but unvisited by the Indians. The inmates had evidently fled in alarm, as the dinner they were preparing was still at the fire and warm, of which our party partook—and then, doubtful of the trail they were on, set out for Mr. Sparkman's, 4 miles distant. It was after night when they reached Mr. Sparkman's, nor was it possible for them to determine whether they were on a trail or not. Great distress filled the house of Mr. Sparkman. There was Mrs. Johns—her arm laid open with a rifle bullet—a ball shot through her neck—and her scalp, so far as the hair extended over her head, most horribly and manglingly taken off—and *she still alive!!* Good God! who can hear the bare recital of such a deed, and not feel horror-stricken at the cold-blooded barbarity! Who can hear, and not feel a thirst to revenge such outrage?

She was able to state the circumstances of the attack upon herself and husband. They were about twenty yards from the house, between 10 and 11 o'clock Thursday morning, when the Indians showed themselves by the corner of a fence close to them. The Indians fired and wounded Mr. Johns in the left breast. Both ran for the house, entered and closed the door. The Indians came up and fired on the house. They called out in English, and told them if they would come out they should not be hurt. The Indians looked in through the cracks (the house was made of logs) and told Mr. Johns and his wife to come out; but they did not consent to do so, but beg-

ged for their lives. The order was given in English to charge the house. The Indians burst in—shot Mr. Johns through the head—he fell, and his wife fell upon his body. An Indian dragged her to the door, and said to her, "hi-e-pas-cha," "go." She asked where, and he pointed towards the head of Black Creek. At that moment she saw another Indian level his rifle—she threw up her arm—the Indian fired—and the ball, cutting lengthwise through the flesh of her arm, passed through her neck. She fell. The Indian came up—dragged her into the hall of the house (the house is what is called a double log-house) and then taking out her comb and tearing the string from her hair, *scalped her*. He did not tear the scalp off, but cut it as butchers take the skin from a beef. During this operation Mrs. Johns was sensible of what was doing. She saw the Indian's scalping-knife, and says it was a round pointed common butcher-knife. She lay as if dead. The Indians plundered the house, taking a pair of portmanteau containing money to some amount, and every thing of value—set fire to the house, and one Indian applied the torch to her clothes—left the house—gave a whoop, and hurried off in the direction, she thought from their noise, of the head of Black Creek. She felt the fire of her clothes upon one leg, and as soon as she dared to move so much, grabbed in her hand a quantity of her own clotted blood, with which she put out her burning clothes. And then, when the Indians were out of hearing, she got up—saw her murdered husband's body unscalped and unmoved from the position in which he fell, except the Indians had put one foot up on the edge of a table. The house was on fire—she made her way out of it, fainting every few minutes. She reached the edge of a swamp—got some water and there lay down, unable to get farther. There she remained till 2 o'clock P. M. when three men, Mr. Johns, the father of her husband, Mr. Lowder, and Mr. M'Kinney came along. They saw the burning house all fallen in except the corners of the logs, the body therein burned—and discovered her, whom they took to be an Indian at first, then a squaw. On advancing to her, what must have been the feelings of her father-in-law, to recognize in the butchered, bloody, almost lifeless woman, his daughter-in-law—and to know that the burned human frame in the house was that of his son! These three men carried her to Mr. Lowder's, and giving the inmates of the house the alarm, and taking them, the two females and their children, went on to Mr. Sparkman's—where our party in pursuit of the Indians, found them as above stated.

It was the trail of these men that was mistaken for that of the Indians. The Indians were all mounted, and the trail was therefore easily mistaken. Mrs. Johns saw eight Indians and one negro—the negro was naked except a woollen flap he wore. She saw no horses and probably there were more than eight Indians, as they would undoubtedly be very likely to leave some with the horses. It was now ascertained that the Indians had taken five horses from Mr. Eubank, one from Mr. Ratcliff, and three from Mr. Johns, whom they murdered, and also that our party was off their trail. It was not possible to follow the trail of horses in the night, and therefore our men en-

camped. Early in the morning they set out, and supposing the Indians turned from the left of the road, they struck into the woods in order to come upon the trail without losing the time of retracing their steps to the house where Mr. Johns was burned. They struck the trail quite early and followed it with all the speed possible. They found where the Indians stopped to take a lunch as was supposed. They continued the pursuit to the head of Black Creek, where finding that the Indians, having, as was known, six hours the start on the day before, had travelled in the night, and that too, with great rapidity, as the trail showed, our townsmen, with those who joined them, making twenty in number, came to the conclusion that further pursuit would be useless, and with disappointment, and regret and reluctance, gave up the pursuit, and it being near night; on Friday they turned for home, and reached here to-day.

The Indians rode with all the speed of their horses. Those they took were among the best in our county, and able to bear pushing. Our party had good horses, and they pushed them in the pursuit all that their speed and bottom would bear, but it was in vain. The enemy expected pursuit, and therefore directed their rapid flight for the nation, where it is supposed they arrived without stopping. It is presumed they made for Payne's Prairie. We had hoped that this daring party would have been rash enough to attempt to drive cattle before them. In that case our men would have pushed on till they overtook them. These Indians came in the same direction they took on their return. There were plainly to be seen here and there the remnants of a trail, especially in the grass and by the palmetto leaves gathered in several places, where they stopped and probably encamped. It is thought they came in ten days or two weeks ago —during which time to the present they have been lurking about Brandy Branch, where Indians have several times been seen. They have undoubtedly spied out this whole section and are now gone to report their intelligence, taking with them nine stolen horses and a woman's scalp. It is true this party of Indians were well mounted on fresh horses, but still the issue of the pursuit shows how almost impossible it is to overtake them in their retreat after committing depredations. If they have a few hours only the start, they can reach the nation in safety and mock pursuit. In truth a good portion of the movements of the army (there are some bright exceptions) have failed of effect through tardiness and through want of a sufficient number of good spies.

That these cursed butcherers, so bold as to come within seven miles to commit their depredations, should escape from so ready, rapid, and hot a pursuit, and that too, from men of known bravery and perseverance, and determined at every hazard to overtake and chastise them, gives us great mortification and pain. They did all that men could do, except running, only twenty strong, and without food and forage, into the nation after them, which would have been folly and rashness.

Upon the arrival at Black Creek of the express sent to Maj. Pierce, he immediately ordered out three companies in different directions

to cut off their retreat. The Indians undoubtedly passed near Kingsley's Pond. We understand a company went to that pass on Friday evening, but saw neither Indians nor their trail. The companies returned Friday night without making any discovery. We are informed that on Saturday morning Major Pierce, at the head of 50 men, went again to strike, if possible, their trail, in consequence of the report of the mail carrier from this place, who arrived Friday night. We pray that Major Pierce, to whom great credit is due for his prompt and vigorous exertions to intercept this banditti, may be able to fall in with them.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Before an order could be issued by Capt. Blanchard, three of his men and two of Capt. Priest's sons volunteered as a guard to escort Mrs. Johns in. Dr. Welch readily volunteered his services as physician. This is the more creditable to Dr. W., as he was then the only physician in town. Col. Dell was laudably active in getting this assistance for Mrs. Johns. He sent his carriage, horse and driver to bring her in, if in the opinion of the physician her wounds would permit her removal. They set out immediately after the return of the company on Saturday. They returned on Monday evening, bringing Mrs. Johns, who endured the removal, a distance of thirty miles, with great fortitude.

It is enough to make the blood chill and rush painfully to the heart, to see this lady mangled as she is, and to think *how*, *when*, and *by whom* the deed was done. She is at Mr. Richards'. Every attention will be paid to her to render her distressed and unfortunate situation as comfortable as possible.

Capt. Thigpin who had command of this little escort, states that they saw Indian signs, and anticipated an attack. But all were determined to execute their mission or die in the attempt. They executed it with credit.

It is thought that Mrs. Johns will recover.

(C.)

Jacksonville, *January* 23*d*, 1837.

Dear Sir :—We, the undersigned, in behalf of the citizens of Jacksonville, and inhabitants of East Florida generally, do, with much respect, tender you our expression of admiration of your unwearied and kind attention in the exercise of your noble profession since you have dwelt among us; the exalted stand you have taken in Florida as a surgeon, and the urbanity of your deportment as a gentleman, claim our warmest sympathies.

Amongst the various opportunities offered for the exercise of your skill, two most remarkable cases have spread a "halo" around you, which must ever attract our lasting admiration and respect; we revert to the circumstances of John Pierson, whose shattered and ruined frame, you by firmness, promptitude, decision and perseverance, restored to health, although by the necessary sacrifice of his arm; and another still more remarkable instance of the wonders of

the healing art, has been recently evidenced by you in the cure of Mrs. Jane Johns; independent of our admiration for your professional abilities, you have claims in this instance upon the community, even of a more exalted character—it will not be readily effaced from the memories of the citizens of Jacksonville, the promptness with which you assented to a call for you to visit this bleeding sufferer, at a distance of thirty miles, through a portion of country known to be at the time, infested by a cruel enemy, when all consideration of danger was set at naught by you, in the contemplation of your sacred duty; and when it was proposed to remunerate you for your services, you with that honest pride, which adds dignity and honor to the human character, rejected the proffered compensation. Not content with this instance of your worth and magnanimity, we are aware that your kindness, care, and unceasing attention to Mrs. Johns, for four months, has thus far been unrequited, except by the sweet reward of self-approval.

Circumstanced as this unfortunate young lady, Mrs. Johns, now is, bereft of her natural protector—her husband—divested of all her property by fire, her peace of mind perhaps blighted forever, and her means of support entirely gone; we are of opinion that it will not only be beneficial to herself but gratifying to the public, that Mrs. Johns should yield to the urgent request of the citizens of Charleston to visit that city, that they may be convinced such statements as have already gone forth in relation to her having been scalped and otherwise dreadfully wounded, have not been exaggerated.

We cannot be surprised that doubt should have existed, her narrative being of so wonderful and tragical a nature.

As Mrs. Johns has not yet recovered from the shock her system has undergone, by such a complication of evils, as those which have recently attended her, and as it is her particular request, that she may longer enjoy the benefits of your skill and care, we venture to solicit, you will accompany her as her Physician and Surgeon.

We are aware of the sacrifice you must make, in abandoning a practice in which you have been so eminently successful; therefore, sir, permit us to insist, that you accept our promise of ample compensation, for this additional mark of your benevolence.

JAMES DELL,
W. J. MILLS,
JOHN L. DOGGET,
J. D. HART,
EMORY RIDER,
H. R. BLANCHARD,
ROBERT BIGELOW,
D. S. GARDINER,
M. K. PINCKSTON,
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